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SUBJECT: CROATIA ANNOUNCES PARTICIPATION IN NATO TRUST FUND FOR BOSNIA

¶1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: Foreign Minister Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic briefed members of the diplomatic corps July 4 about Croatia's participation in the NATO trust fund for Bosnia and Herzegovina. She noted that Croatia had benefited from such assistance in the past and could now offer financial assistance and experience to help others move forward on the path toward Euro-Atlantic integration. The goal of the project is reintegration and conversion of some 6000 redundant military personnel, which should assist BiH in its process of defense reform. The Netherlands has pledged 1 million euros and the UK approximately the same (450,000 pounds sterling). This is yet another step by the GOC to show that it is ready to work with NATO and the countries of the region to assist in stabilization and become a net exporter of security. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

¶2. Croatian Foreign Affairs and European Integration Minister Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic informed representatives of the diplomatic corps in Zagreb July 4 about a NATO project aimed at establishing a trust fund for Bosnia-Herzegovina. In line with its policy of active support to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, together with Great Britain and the Netherlands, became a leading participant in this NATO project which will reintegrate personnel from the defense system into civil society, the minister said. The project was approved in Brussels on June 15th. Grabar Kitarovic said Croatia was the first candidate country to which NATO entrusted a leading role in one of its projects which, she noted, is a clear signal that Croatia is seen as a future member of the Alliance and is ready to contribute to the international and regional security.

¶3. The Croatian government will donate EUR 100,000 to the fund for Bosnia-Herzegovina, which will help some 6,000 members of the defense system to reintegrate into civil society. The implementation of the project, worth some EUR 8 million, will last three years.

Bradtko